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THE
Isle of Devils

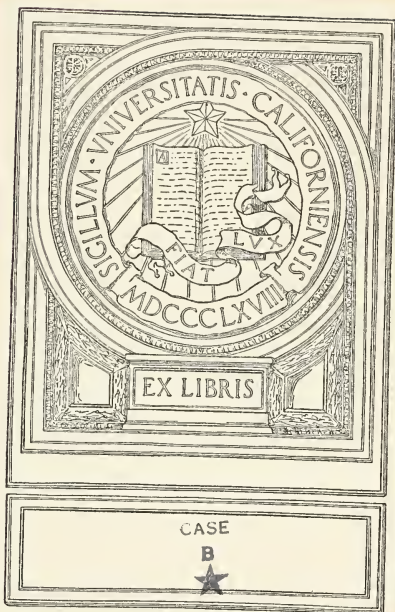
by

M. G. LEWIS, M.P.

1912.

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Edition limited to two hundred and fifty copies.

This is No. 50.....

The
ISLE OF DEVILS.

A Historical Tale,

Founded on an Anecdote in the Annals of Portugal,

by

M. G. LEWIS, M.P.

A Faithful Reprint of the Rare Edition of 1827,
of which only a few copies were issued
for the author's friends.

London :

GEORGE T. JUCKES,

35, St. Martin's Court, W.C.

1912.



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PREFACE.

THIS poem was written by Monk Lewis, in 1816, on his last voyage to Jamaica. A few copies were printed from the original manuscript at the *Advertiser* office, Kingston, Jamaica, in 1827, for the sole use of certain friends and admirers. It is from one of these, recently acquired, that the following careful reprint has been made. The work is a great literary curiosity, as well as a striking example of Lewis's wonderful power of imagination in blending the horrible and the beautiful; mingling the most gorgeous and voluptuous descriptions, with scenes and characters loathsome and diabolic. Students and collectors of rare and out-of-the-way items in the bye-paths of literature will welcome this opportunity of becoming acquainted with one of the most powerful and yet (until now) practically unknown works of the Great Master whose place in Literature is with Poe, Baudelaire, and Mrs. Shelley.

1912.

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THE Isle of Devils.

CANTO I.

SPEED Halcyon, speed, and here construct thy nest,
 Brood o'er these waves, and charm the winds to rest ;
No wave should dare to swell, no wind to roar,
Till lands yon morning maid on Lisbon's shore.
That maid, as Venus fair, and chaste as she,
When first to dazzl'd sky and wondering sea
The bursting conch, love's new-born Queen exposed,
The brightest pearl that ever shell enclosed.
While love's fantastic hand had joy'd to braid,
Her locks with shells and weeds, like some sea maid :
High seated at the stern was Irza seen,
And seem'd to rule the flood, as ocean's Queen.
Smooth sail'd the bark—the sun shone full and bright ;
The glitt'ring billows danced along the light ;
While Irza, free from fear, from sorrow free,
Bright as the sun, and buoyant as the sea,
Bade o'er the lute her flying fingers move,
And sang a Spanish lay of Moorish love.*

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* It appears, that here the Author intended to introduce Irza's song, but death prevented the completion of the Poem.

Scarce moved the zephyr's wings, while breathed the song
 And waves in silence bore the bark along.
 'Twas Irza sang !—Rosalvo at her side,
 Gazed on his Cherub love, his destined bride—
 Felt at each look his soul in softness melt,
 Nor wished to feel more bliss than then he felt.
 'Gainst the high mast, intent on book and beads,
 A Reverend Abbot leans, and prays, and reads ;
 And oft with secret glance the pair surveys—
 Marks how she looks, and watches what he says.
 An idle task ! The terms which breathed their love
 Had served for prayer, and passed unblamed above.
 He finds each tender phrase so free from harm—
 So pure each thought, each look so chaste, though warm—
 Still to his beads and book he turns again,
 Pleased to have proved his guardian care so vain ;
 While oft a blush of shame his pale cheek wears,
 To find his thoughts so much less pure than theirs.
 Oh they were pure ! pure as the sun whose ray
 Loves on the shrines of Virgin Saints to play ;
 Pure as the falling snow, e're yet its shower
 Bends with its weight its own pale fragile flower.
 Not fourteen years were Irza's—(nay 'tis true)
 Most maids, at twelve, knew more than Irza knew ;
 And scarce two more had spread with silken down
 Her amorous cousin's cheek of glowing brown.
 His tutor sage, (in fact, not show, a Saint)
 Had kept his heart and mind secure from taint.
 In liberal arts, in healthful manly sports—
 In studies fit for councils, camps and courts—
 His moments found their full and best employ,
 Nor left one leisure hour for guilty joy.
 Since her blue dove-like eyes, six springs had seen,
 Immersed in cloistered shades had Irza been ;
 From duties done her sole delight derivén,

And her sole care to please the Queen of Heaven :
 None e'er approached her—save the pure and good ;
 Her promised spouse—that monk who near them stood ;
 Her viceroy uncle, and some guardian nun
 Were all she e'er had seen by moon or sun.
 No amorous forms by wanton art designed,
 Had e'er inflamed her blood, or stained her mind :
 No hint in books, no coarse or doubtful phrase,
 E'er bade her curious thoughts explore the maze ;
 Nor glowing dreams, by memory's pencil drawn,
 Had e'er profaned her sleep, and made her blush at
 morn.

With flowers she decked the virgin mother's shrine,
 Nor guessed a wonder, made that name divine.
 That very love which lent her looks such fire,
 N'er raised one blameful thought or loose desire.
 Like waves of gold, which in Alembics roll,
 The flames she suffered, but refined her soul—
 Made it more free from stain, more light from dross,
 With brighter lustre, and with softer gloss.
 That which she bore, a bridegroom well might claim,
 A sister's love, and bear a brother's name ;
 And e'en when now her lips in playful bliss
 Sealed on Rosalvo's eyes a roseate kiss,
 Love's highest, dearest charm she meant to show,
 Nor thought he more could ask, or she bestow.

CANTO II.

From Goa's precious sands to Lisbon's shore,
 The Viceroy's countless wealth that vessel bore ;
 There jewels lay in heaps of various dyes,
 Ingots of Gold, and Pearls of wondrous size.
 And there (two gems worth all that Cortez won)
 He placed his blooming niece and only son.
 Sebastian sought the Moors ! with loyal zeal,
 Rosalvo cased his youthful limbs in steel—
 To die or conquer by his Sovereign's side
 He came, and with him came his promised bride.
 E'en now in Lisbon's court for Irza's hair,
 Virgins the Myrtle's bridal wreath prepare.
 And Hymen waves his torch from Cintra's towers,
 Hails the slow bark, and chides the loitering hours.
 Seldom in this frail world two hearts we see,
 So blest, and meriting, so blest to be ;
 Gently then. O ye winds, your pinions move,
 And speed in safety home the bark of love.
 Brood Halcyon, Brood ! thy sea spell chaunt again,
 And keep the mirror of th' enchanted main,
 Where his white wing the vaulting tropic dips,
 Calm as their hearts, and smiling as their lips.
 The charm prevails ! hush'd are the waves, and still
 Th' expanded sails, light favoring Zephyrs fill ;
 Wafting with motion scarce perceived : and now
 In rapture Irza from the vessel's prow,
 Gazed on an Isle with verdure gay and bright,

Which seemed (so green it shone in solar light)
 An Emerald set in silver ! long her eyes
 Dwelt on its rocks—and oh ! dear friend, she cries
 (And clasps Rosalvo's hands)—admire with me,
 Yon Isle which rising crowns the silent sea.
 How bold yon mossy cliffs which guard the strand,
 Like spires, and domes, and towers in fairy land ;
 How green the plains ! how balsam-fraught the breeze—
 How bend with golden fruit the loaded trees !
 While fluttering 'mid their boughs in joyful notes,
 Myriads of birds attune their warbling throats.
 Blooms all the ground with flowers, and mark, oh ! mark,
 That giant palm whose foliage green and dark
 Plays on the sun-clad rock : beneath, a cave
 Spreads wide its sparry mouth, while loosely wave
 A thousand creepers, dyed with thousand stains,
 Whose wreaths enrich the trees and clothe the plains.
 Dear friend, how blest if passed my life could be,
 In that fair Isle with God alone and thee.
 Far from the world, from man and fiend secure,
 No guilt to harm us, and no vice to lure !
 Bright round the Virgin's shrine would blush and bloom,
 That world of flowers which pour such rich perfume ;
 And sweet yon caves repeat with mellowing swell,
 Eve's closing Hymn when chimed the vesper bell.
 The Pilot heard—" Oh ! spring of life," he cried,
 How bright and beauteous seems the bliss untried ;
 I too, like you, in youth's romantic hours,
 Dreamt not of wasps in fruit, or thorn in flowers.
 And when on banks of sand the sunbeams shone,
 I deemed each sparkling flint a precious stone.
 Ah ! noble lady, learn that Isle so fair,
 The fields all roses, and all balm the air.
 That Isle is one, where every leaf's a spell,
 Where no good thing e'er dwelt, nor e'er shall dwell ;

No fisher forced from home by adverse breeze,
 Would slake his thirst from yon infernal trees ;
 No ship-wrecked sailors from the swallowing waves,
 Would seek a refuge in those haunted caves.
 There flock the damned—there Satan reigns and revels,
 And hence yon Isle is called “ The Isle of Devils ” !
 Nor think on rumour’s faith my tale is given,
 Once hot in youthful blood when hell nor heaven,
 Much filled my thoughts (the truth with shame I tell,
 Holy St. Francis guard thy votary well) ;
 In quest of water near that Isle I drew,
 When lo ! such monstrous forms appalled my view,
 Such shrieks I heard, sounds all so strange and dread,
 That from the strand with shuddering haste I fled,
 Plyed as for life the oar, nor backward turned my
 head. }
 And tho’ since then hath flown full many a year,
 Still sinks my heart and shake my limbs with fear,
 Soon as yon fatal Isle alarms mine eye :
 Cross we our breasts, say “ Ave ” and pass by.

CANTO III.

The Isle is past, and still in tranquil pride,
 Bears the rich bark its treasures o'er the tide.
 And now the sun e're yet his lamps he shrouds,
 Stains the pure western sky with crimson clouds.
 Now from the sea's last verge he sheds his rays,
 And sinks triumphant in a golden blaze.
 Still o'er the Heavens reflected lustres flow,
 Which make the world of waters gleam and glow ;—
 Wide, and more wide, each billow shines more bright,
 And all the empurpled ocean floats in light.
 Soon as fair Irza marked the evening's close,
 Grave from her seat the young enthusiast rose ;
 Told o'er her beads, and when the string was said,
 " Ave Maria," sung the enraptured maid.
 Her looks so humble, so devout her air,
 Each worldly wish appeared so lost in prayer ;
 All felt no thought could to her mind be near,
 That men her form could see, her voice could hear.
 Hushed all the ship ! Each sailor checked his glee,
 Clasped his hard hands, and bent his trembling knee ;
 And each, as rose that sweet mysterious strain,
 (Best help in trouble and sweet balm in pain)—
 Gazed on the maid with mingled love and fear,
 Damp on his cheek perceived the unwonted tear,
 Then raised to heaven his eyes in earnest prayer,
 And half believed himself already there ;
 Low too Rosalvo bent, nor knew if now,

For Mary's love, or Irza's rose his vow.
Scarce e'en the Monk forbore to kneel ; his child
Fondly he view'd, and sweetly, gravely smiled,
And blest that God, as swelled each melting note,
Who gave such heavenly powers to human throat.
Melodious strains ! Oh, speed your flight above,
On rapture's wings ; and reach the ear of love ;
Oh spread thy starry robe, celestial queen,
(For much thine aid she needs) from ill to screen
Thy Virgin votress ! Silence holds the deep,
And e'en the helmsman's eyes are sealed in sleep ;
Yet mark those gathering clouds ! the moon is fled !
Mark too, that death-like stillness, deep and dread !
And, hark ! from yon black cloud an awful voice,
Pours the wild chaunt and bids the wind rejoice !

SONG OF THE TEMPEST FIEND.

I marked her ! the Pennants how gaily they streamed,
 How well was she armed for resistance ;
 The waves which sustained her, how brightly they
 beamed,
 In the sun's setting rays ; and the sailors all seemed
 To forget the storm-spirit's existence.

But I marked her ! and now from the clouds I descend,
 My spells to the billows I mutter,
 I clap my black pinions—my wand I extend
 In darkness the sky and the ocean to blend,
 And the winds mark the charms which I utter.

Now more, and more rapid, in Eddies I whirl,
 In my voice while the thunder-clap rumbles ;
 And now the white mountainous waves as they curl,
 I joy o'er the deck of the vessel to hurl,
 And laugh as she tosses and tumbles.

The crew is alarmed, but the tempest prevails,
 No care from my fury delivers ;
 E're there's time for their furling the canvas—the sails
 From the top to the bottom I rend with my nails,
 And they stream in the blast torn to shivers.

The sky and the ocean fierce battle they wage,
 The elements all are in action ;
 No sailor the tempest now hopes to assuage—
 What clamours ! what hurry ! what oaths ! and what
 rage !
 Oh brave ! what despair and distraction.

Their heart-strings they ache, while my ravage they view,
 Each knee 'gainst its fellow is knocking ;
 My eyes darting lightnings to dazzle the crew,
 Burn and blaze—and those lightnings so forked and
 so blue,
 Make the darkness of midnight more shocking.

The morn to that Vessel no succour shall bring !
 Now high o'er the main-mast I hover :
 Now I plunge from the sky to the deck with a spring,
 And I shatter the mast with one flap of my wing—
 It cracks and it breaks, and goes over.

Hew away, gallant sailors ! fatigue never dread ;
 You shall all rest at morn from your labours :
 The ocean's white mantle shall o'er you be spread,
 The white bones of Mariners pillow your head,
 And the whale and the shark be your neighbours.

For I swoop from aloft, and I roar and I burn,
 While my spouts the salt billows are drinking ;
 I drive 'gainst the vessel, and beat down the stern,
 And pour in a flood that shall never return,
 And all shout, she is sinking ! she's sinking !

The barge ! well remembered—'tis stout, and 'tis large,
 And will live in the billow's commotion ;
 But now all my spouts from the clouds I discharge,
 And down goes the vessel—and down goes the barge—
 Hurrah ! I reign Lord of the ocean.

How their shrieks rose in chorus ! now all is at rest—
 The tempest no longer is brewing :
 My dreams, by the harm newly done, will be blest,
 So I'll rest for a while on a thunder-cloud's breast,
 Then rouse to hurl round me new ruin.

CANTO IV.

Hush'd is the storm—the Heavens no longer frown,
 And o'er that spot where late the boat went down
 All bright and smiling glides the treacherous wave,
 Like sunshine playing on a new-made grave.
 Full rose the watery moon ; it showed a plank
 To which all deadly pale, with tresses dank ;
 And robes of white (o'er which the storm had flung
 Loose wreaths of ocean flowers), unconscious hung
 A fair frail form—'Twas Irza ! to the shore
 Each following wave the virgin nearer bore ;
 And now the mountain surge o'erwhelm'd the land,
 And flying left her on the wished-for strand.
 Then hope and love of life her powers renew,
 Swift towards a cliff she speeds which towers in view ;
 Nor waits the wave's return—and now again,
 Safe on the shore and rescued from the main ;
 Prostrate she falls and thanks the Sire of life,
 Whose arm had saved her from the billowy strife.
 That duty done—she rose, and gazed around ;
 Mossed are the rocks, and flowers bestrew the ground.
 Not distant far, a group of fragrant trees,
 Bend with their golden fruit—the ocean breeze
 Shakes a gigantic palm, which o'er a cave
 Its dark green foliage spreads ; and wildly wave
 Their drooping wreaths, all gemmed with midnight dews,
 A thousand creeping plants of thousand hues ;
 Full flashed the dreadful thought on Irza's view,

That cave—those giant trees—that palm she knew !
 Then from her lips for ever fled the smile,
 “ Mother of God ! ” she shrieked, “ The Demon Isle.”
 Long on a broken crag she knelt and prayed,
 And called on every Saint for strength and aid ;
 Then speechless, senseless laid, when lo !
 Strange mutterings near her, roused from torpid woe
 Her soul to fresh alarms—her head she reared,
 And near her face, a hideous face appeared—
 But strait ’twas gone. In trembling haste she rose,
 And saw a ring of monstrous dwarfs enclose
 Her rugged couch—Not Tenier’s hand could paint,
 Forms more grotesque to scare the tempted saint ;
 Than here (as in they prest in circling throng)
 With gnashing teeth, seemed for her blood to long,
 And grinned, and glared, and gloated ! Quicker grew
 Her breath—Death hemmed her round—as yet ’tis true
 Far off they kept—but soon more daring grown,
 More near they crept, oft sharp’ning on some stone
 Their long crook’d claws ; and still as on they came,
 They screeched and chattered—and their eyes of flame
 Twinkling and giggling, told what pleasure grim,
 They’d feel to rack and rend her, limb from limb ;
 “ Heaven take my soul ! ” she cried—when, hark ! a
 moan,

So full, so sad, so strange—not shriek—not groan—
 Something scarce earthly, breathed above her head,
 ’Twas heard ; and instant every imp was fled.
 What was that sound ? What pitying saint from high,
 Had stooped to save her ? now to Heaven her eye,
 Grateful she raised—Almighty Powers ! a form,
 Gigantic as the Palm—black as the storm ;
 All shagged with hair, wild, strange in shape and show,
 Towered on the loftiest cliff and gazed below.
 On her he gazed, and gazed, so fixed, so hard,

Like knights of bronze some hero's tomb who guard ;
 Bright wreaths of scarlet plumes his temples crown'd ;
 And round his temples, arms, and neck, were wound
 Unnumbered grassy strings of Crystals bright,
 And shells, and spars, and berries, red and white.
 On her he gazed—and floods of sable fires,
 Rolled his huge eyes, and spoke his fierce desires ;
 As on his club (a torn-up limb) he leaned.
 “ Help Heaven ! ” (thought Irza), “ ’tis the master
 Fiend ! ”

Not long he paused—he now with one quick bound,
 Sprang from the cliff and lighted on the ground.
 Back flew the maid in terror, but her fear
 Was needless ; humbly, slowly, crept he near,
 Then kissed the ground—his club before her laid,
 And of his neck a footstool would have made.
 But from his touch she shrunk, he raised his head,
 And saw her limbs convulsed—her face all dread ;
 And felt the cause his presence : sad and slow,
 He rose, resumed his club, and turned to go.
 Reproachful was his look, but still ’twas kind !
 He climbed the rock, but oft he gazed behind.
 He reached the cave ; one look below he threw,
 Plaintive again he moaned, and with slow steps withdrew.

CANTO V.

She is alone ; she breathes again—Fly ! Fly !—
 Ah ! wretched Girl, too late—with frenzied eye,
 (Scarce gone the master Fiend)—his Imps she sees,
 Pour from the rocks and drop from all the trees.
 With yell and squeak, and many a horrid sound,
 And form a living fence to ring her round !
 “ Now then,” she cried, “ All’s over ! oh ! farewell,
 Farewell, Rosalvo ! ” On her knee she fell,
 And told her beads with trembling hands, yet still—
 On came the Dwarfs ; and soon with wanton skill,
 (Lured by its coral glow, and cross of gold),
 One snatched her chaplet, nor forsook his hold,
 Tho’ hard she struggled ! While more bold, more fierce,
 Another seized her arm, and dared to pierce
 Its white with his sharp teeth ; the pure blood streamed
 Fast from the wound, and loud the Virgin screamed.
 And straight again was heard that strange sad groan,
 And instant all the Imps again were flown !
 Scarce knowing that she lived—scarce conscious why,
 Half grieved, half grateful, Irza raised her eye ;
 Still on the rock (nor dared he down to spring),
 Dark and majestic stood the Demon King ;
 Then lowly knelt and raised his arm to wave
 An Orange branch, and court her to his cave.
 Lost are her friends ; no help, no hope is nigh,
 What shall she do ? and whither can she fly ?
 To him already twice her life she owes,

And but his presence now restrains her foes.
 On wings of flame the sun had fled the main,
 And peeping thro' the trees full oft, too plain ;
 The Imps dart rage from their green globes of sight,
 She heard their gibberings, and she marked their spite.
 And as they eyed her form, their care she saw
 To grind their teeth and whet each cruel claw ;
 Dæmons alike, the Monarch Dæmon's breast,
 Appeared less fierce—of ills she chose the least.
 Sought where, profaned, her coral rosary lay,
 Then slowly mounted where he showed the way ;
 Cautious he led her towards his lone abode,
 And cleared each stone which might impede her road.
 With pain she trod, she reached his cave ; but there
 No more their weight her wearied limbs could bear ;
 Exhausted--fainting--anguish--terror--thirst—
 Fatigue o'erpower'd her frame—her heart **must burst !**
 Her eyes grew dim ! sunk on the rock she lies,
 And sinking, prays she never more may rise.

CANTO V.

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 And sinking, prays she never more may rise.

CANTO VII.

Days creep—months roll—no change—no hope—and oh !
 Rosalvo lost—what hope can life bestow ?
 Death—only Death, she feels can end her woes,
 Nor doubts soon death will bring that wished-for close.
 For now her mind, her frame, confess disease,
 Painful and faint she moves ; her tottering knees
 Scarce bear her weight ; and oft by humour moved,
 Her sickening soul now loathes what late it loved.
 It comes ! the moment comes ! her frame is rent
 By sharper pangs ; her nerves too strongly bent,
 Seem on the point to break, her forehead burns,
 Her curdling blood is fire—is ice—by turns ;
 Her heart-strings crack—this hour is sure her last,
 Fainting she sinks, and hopes that hour is past.
 Wake Irza, wake, to grief more strange and deep,
 Still must thou live, and only live to weep ;
 Oh lift thine aching head, thy languid eyes,
 And mark what hideous stranger near thee lies.
 “ Guard me, all blessed Saints ! ” a monster child
 The rushes prest and as it grimly smiled ;
 Its shaggy limbs and eyes of sable fire,
 Betrayed the crime and claimed its hellish sire.
 “ Lost ! lost ! my soul is lost ! ”—the affrighted maid,
 (Ah ! now a maid no more) distracted said,

And wrung her hands ; those words she scarce could say,
 And would have prayed, but feared 'twas sin to pray.
 That only Veil which ne'er admits a stain,
 The Veil of ignorance is rent in twain :
 In spite of cloisters, virtue, horror, youth,
 She knows and feels, and shudders at the truth.
 That night accursed—in death-like swoon she slept,
 Then near her couch if that dark Dæmon crept,
 Oh ! where was then her guardian Angel's aid ?
 And did not Mary then protect her maid ?
 Deprived of sense—betrayed by place and time,
 Then was she doomed to share the unconscious crime ;
 Debased, deflowered, and stamp'd a wretch for life,
 A Monster's mother, and a Dæmon's wife.
 Oh ! at that thought, her soul what passions tear,
 How then she beats her breast—how rends her hair ;
 And bids with golden ringlets scattered round,
 Stream all the air, and glitter all the ground !
 Sighs, sobs, and shrieks, the place of words supply,
 And still she mourns to live, and prays to die ;
 Till heart denies to groan, and eyes to flow :
 Then on her bed of rushes sinking low,
 Languid and lost she lies, in silent, senseless woe. }
 What lifts her burning head ? What opes her eye ?
 What makes her blood run back ?—a faint shrill cry ;
 Too well alas, that cry was understood,
 The Monster pined for want, and claimed its food.
 Then in her heart what rival passions strove !
 How shrank disgust ! how yearned maternal love !
 Now to its life her feelings she prefers,
 Now nature wakes and makes her own—" 'tis hers."

Loathing its sight she melts to hear its cries,
And while she yields the breast, averts her eyes.
Not so the Dæmon sire, the child he raised,
He danced it, kissed it, nursed it, knelt and gazed,
Till joyful tears gushed forth, and dimmed his sight ;
Not Irza's self was viewed with more delight.
He held it towards her ; horror seemed to thrill
Her frame—he sighed, and clasped it closer still ;
Once, and but once, his features wrath expressed,
He saw her shudder as it drained her breast :
And while reproach half mingled with his moan,
Snatched it from her's, and pressed it to his own.

CANTO VIII.

Three months had past ; still lived the Monster brat,
 Its Sire had sought the wood—alone she sat.
 She sheds no tears—no tears are left to shed,
 Unmoistened burn her eyes—her heart seems dead.
 Her form seems marble ; Lo ! from far the sound
 Of Music steals and fills the caves around.
 She starts !—scarce breathing—trembling—“ oh ! for
 wings ”—
 But hark ! for nearer now the Minstrel sings,
 “ He ! He ! ” That love-lorn dirge — that heavenly
 tongue,
 That air she taught him—’twas Rosalvo’s song ;
 Rosalvo whom the waves which wrecked their bark,
 Had borne like her (for purpose sad and dark),
 To that strange Isle ; tho’ far remote the beach,
 From Irza’s Grot, which fate ordained him reach.
 But now at length his curious search explores,
 Those rude and slippery crags and distant shores ;
 And while he treads his dangerous path, the strains
 Which Irza taught him, soothe her lover’s pains.
 She hears his steps, and hears them soon more near,
 And loud she cries—“ Rosalvo ! hear ! oh hear !
 “ ’Tis Irza calls ! ”—and now more quick, more nigh,
 Down the steep rock she hears those footsteps fly.

Again she calls—he comes ! he searches round,
 He seeks the gate, and soon the gate is found ;
 Alas ! 'twas found in vain ; the marble guard,
 Seemed rooted as the rock whose mouth it barr'd.
 Yet still with laboring nerves to move the stone—
 He struggles ; now he stops, and hark ! a groan !
 But one, then all was hushed—a death-like chill
 Seized Irza's heart, and seemed her veins to thrill.
 Fain had she called her youthful bridegroom's name,
 Her tongue, fear's numbing fingers seemed to lame.
 Footsteps—more near they drew—slow rolled the stone—
 The infernal Gaoler came—but came alone ;
 With anxious glance his eye explored the cell,
 But when it fixed on hers, abashed it fell.
 He knelt and seemed to fear her frown—he bore
 His club—'twas splashed with brains !—'twas red with
 gore.

She feared,—she guessed,—she ran, she rushed, she flew,
 Nor did the Fiend her frantic course pursue :
 “ Rosalvo ! speak ! Rosalvo ! ” shrill, yet sweet.
 She wakes the echoes—what obstructs her feet ?
 'Tis he, the young, the good, the kind, the fair,
 As some frail lily which the passing share,
 Or wanton boy hath wounded, droops his head,
 Its whiteness withered, and its fragrance fled.
 Low lay the youth, and from his temple's wound
 With precious streams bedewed the ensanguined ground ;
 Then reason fled its seat, she shrieks, she raves,
 And fills with hideous yell the ocean caves ;
 Rends her bright locks, and laughs to see them fly,
 And bids them seek Rosalvo in the sky.

To dig his grave she fiercely ploughs the ground,
 Loud shouts his name, nor feels the flints that wound
 Her bosom's globes, and stain their snow with gore,
 As wild she dashes down and beats the rocky floor.
 Now fail her strength, her spirits—mute she sits,
 Sullen and sad, then laughs and sings by fits ;
 A statue now she seems, or one just dead,
 Her looks all gloom, her eyes two balls of lead.
 Then simply smiles, and sings with idiot glee,
 " Ave Maria ! Benedicite ! " ;
 Till nature's powers revived by rest again,
 The fury passion riots in her brain,
 And all is rage, and helpless, hopeless, pain.

}

CANTO IX.

Days, weeks, months flew—time came with slow relief
 But still at length it came : no more her grief
 Disturbs her brain ; she knows “ that grave was his ” ;
 And fully feels herself the wretch she is !
 She rises—towards the Grotto’s mouth she goes,
 Nor dare the Fiend her wandering steps oppose.
 She seeks that spot on which Rosalvo fell—
 On which he died—she knows that spot too well.
 But lo ! no corse was there, all smooth and green,
 A velvet turf o’erstrown with flowers was seen,
 And fenced with roses—“ Oh whose pious care,
 Hath decked his grave ? Hear, gracious heaven, his
 prayer,
 When most he needs ” ; While thus in doubt she stands,
 She marks the Fiend’s approach—his ebon hands
 Sustained a gourd of flowers of various hue,
 He poured them, kissed the turf, and straight withdrew.
 Thither each morn his blooming gifts he bore,
 Smoothed the green sod, and strewed it o’er and o’er ;
 Thither each morn came Irza : on those flowers
 She wept, she prayed, she sang away the hours ;
 So mourns the nightingale in poplar spray,
 Her callow brood by shepherds borne away ;
 Weeps all the night, and from her green retreat,
 Fills the wide grove with warblings sad as sweet.
 And still fresh cares succeed—she feels again
 Mysterious pangs, nor doubts her cause of pain ;

Too sure while lost in maniac state she lay,
 Her strength, her wits, her feeling all away.
 Once more the Fiend had seized th' unguarded hour,
 Subdued her weakness, and abused his power.
 Again Lucina came ! that new-born cry,
 Shuddering again she heard ; her fearful eye
 Wandered awhile around, nor dared to stay,
 " There—there he lies ! my child ! " with fresh essay,
 Once more she turned ; but when at length her sight,
 Fixed on its face, her wonder, her delight,
 Can ne'er by tongue be told, by fancy guessed,
 Frantic she caught, she kissed, and lulled him on her
 breast.

Oh ! who can paint how Irza loved that child,
 Grieved if he moaned, and smiled whene'er he smiled ;
 His dimpled arm soft on the rushes lay,
 Thro' his fine skin the blood was seen to play :
 That skin than down of swans more smooth and white,
 Nor e'er shone summer sky so blue and bright,
 As shone the eyes of that same cherub-elf,
 In small the model of her beauteous self.
 The scant gold locks that gilt his ivory brow
 Were sunbeams gleaming on a globe of snow ;
 And on his coral lips the red which stood,
 Shamed the first rose whose milk was fond Adonis'
 blood.

By elfin thefts since nurses were beguiled,
 Never stole fairy yet, a lovelier child.
 No sweeter Babe in nature's charms arrayed,
 A mother's fears and throes at length o'erpaid ;
 Not when Lucina first in myrtle grove,
 To Beauty's kiss, presented new-born Love,
 And while with wondering eyes the immortal boy,
 Drank in new light and poured ecstatic joy,
 He kissed and drained by turns her fragrant breast,

Till amorous ringdoves coo'd the God to rest.
 Mothers may love as much, but never more,
 Nor e'er did mother love so well before.
 As Irza loved that child—her sable Lord
 Marked well that love ; and now to health restored,
 He felt her child to home would chain her feet ;
 Nor rolled the stone to close her lone retreat.
 Still when he went, he with him bore away
 That favourite babe—nor feared her steps would stray ;
 Armed with his club she now might safely rove,
 Thro' verdant vale, or weep in lonely grove.
 For soon the Dwarfs were used to bear her sight,
 Knew that dread club, nor dared indulge their spite ;
 Tho' looks of rage they oft at distance cast,
 And shrilly squeaked and clamoured as she past ;
 Still by their flight, when near she came, was seen,
 They paid allegiance and confessed their queen.

CANTO X.

One morn her savage Lord in quest of food,
 Forsook the cave and sought the adjacent wood ;
 And as her darling boy he with him bore,
 Irza* [alone] might pace the sounding shore ;
 Listless and slow she moved—she climbed with pain,
 A towering crag which beetled o'er the main.
 Now three full years had flown since Irza's eye,
 [Had gazed on human form, and since reply]
 From human tongue had blest her ear ; 'tis true,
 Throned on a cliff (which spread before her view,
 The blue sea's liquid plains) she once desried,
 A gallant ship which ploughed the neighbouring tide.
 By cries to draw it near she long essayed,
 And oft a palm branch waved in sign for aid ;
 But all her cries and all her signs were vain,
 On sailed the bark, nor e'er returned again.
 On that same cliff she sat and eyed the wave,
 And wished she there had found a watery grave.
 Fain had she sought one then, plunged from the steep,
 And buried all her sufferings in the deep ;
 But faith alike and reason bade her shun
 That wish, nor break a thread which God had spun.
 Hark ! was it fancy ? Hark again !—the shores
 Echo the dash of fast approaching oars !
 Oh ! how she gazed ! A Barge (by Friars 'twas manned)

* The words and line within brackets, are supplied—the manuscript being defective.

Cut the smooth waves and sought the rocky strand
 Soon (while his withered hands a crosier hold,
 All rich with gems, and rough with sculptured gold)
 Landing alone a reverend Monk appeared,
 His jewell'd cross—his flowing silvery beard—
 “ ’Tis he ! ’Tis he ! ” swift down the steep she flies,
 Falls at the stranger’s feet and frantic cries,
 Down her pale cheek, while tears in torrents roll
 “ Help, Father Abbot ! save me ! save my soul ! ”
 “ ’Twas he indeed ! that Bark which ne’er returned,
 Well on the cliff her fair wild form discerned ;
 But deemed some Island Fiend had spread a snare,
 To lure them with a form so wild and fair ;
 Yet oft at Lisbon would those seamen tell,
 How angled for their souls the Prince of Hell ;
 And warmly paint, their leisure to beguile,
 The fallen Angel of th’ enchanted Isle.
 At length the wonder reached the Abbot’s ear,
 And prompt affection made the wonder clear ;
 “ ’Twas Irza ! Shipwreck’d Irza ! none but she,
 So heavenly fair, so lonely lost could be.”
 And straight again he sped the sea to brave,
 Which once before had yawned that good man’s grave.
 Resolved for Irza’s sake to dare the worst,
 Which fate could offer on those rocks accurst ;
 Far off his ship was anchored—on that strand,
 Not India’s wealth could make a Layman land,
 Therefore with none but Monks he manned his barge,
 Which bore of beads and bells a sacred charge ;
 Whole heaps of relics left by Cintra’s nuns,
 And holy water blessed at Rome by tons.
 His pains were all o’erpaid—he saw again
 His favourite child, and kindly soothed her pain.
 And while her tale he heard, oft dropt a tear,
 And signed his beard-swept breast in awe and fear ;

Then bade her speed the friendly bark to gain,
 And fly the infernal Monarch's green domain,
 Nor yield her tyrant time to cast a spell,
 And raise to cross her flight, the powers of Hell.
 Then first from Irza's cheeks the glow of red,
 By hopes of rescue raised, grew faint and fled.
 Trembling she named the cherub boy—confest
 A mother's fondness, filled her mother's breast.
 Described how fair he looked, how sweet he smiled,
 And feared her flight might quite destroy her child.
 Then rose the Abbot's ire. "Oh guilty care!"
 Frowning he cried, and shook his hoary hair;
 "Fair is the Imp! and shall he therefore breathe,
 "To win more subjects for the realms beneath?
 "The Fiends most dangerous are those spirits bright,
 "Who toil for Hell and seem like sons of light;
 "And still when Satan spreads his subtlest snare,
 "The baits are azure eyes, the lines are golden hair!
 "Name thou the brat no more!—To Cintra's walls,
 "Fly where thy footsteps mild repentance calls.
 "Kneel not—I'll hear no plaint—I'm deaf to prayer,
 "Quick, Brethren, to the Bark this maniac bear.
 "Speed! Speed! no tears! no struggling! no delay!
 "Row, Brethren, row, and waft us swift away!"
 The Monks obeyed—Then, then, in Irza's soul,
 What various passions raged and mocked control.
 Now how she mourned—now how she wept for joy—
 How loathed the Sire, and how adored the boy.
 The Barge is gained: they row—when lo! from high, }
 Her ear again received that well-known cry, }
 That sad strange moan! she starts, and lifts her eye. }
 There on a rock which fenced the strand, once more:
 She saw her Demon husband stand, he bore
 The beauteous babe; and while he viewed the Barge,
 Keen anguish seemed each feature to enlarge;

And shake each Giant limb. With piteous air,
 His arms he spreads, his hands he clasped in prayer.
 Knelt—wept—and while his eyeballs seemed to burn,
 Oft showed the child and wooed her to return.
 The Monks his suit disdain—the Bark recedes :
 More humbly now he kneels, more earnest pleads ;
 But when he found no prayers their course delay,
 And still the Barge pursue its watery way ;
 Then 'gainst his grief and rage no longer proof,
 He gnashed his teeth, he stampt his iron hoof ;
 Whirled the boy wildly round and round his head,
 Dash'd it against the rocks and howling fled.
 Loud shrieks the mother—changed to stone she stands,
 And silent lifts to heaven her clay-cold hands ;
 Then sinking down—stretched on the floor she lies,
 Hid her pale face, and clos'd her breaking eyes.
 But hark ! Why shout the Monks ? “ again ” they
 said, }
 “ Again the Demon comes ? ” with desperate dread,
 Starts the poor wretch and lifts her anguished head.
 Yes ! there the Infant murderer stands once more,
 But now far different were the looks he bore ;
 No bending knee, no suppliant glance was seen,
 Proud was his port, and stern and fierce his mien.
 His blood-stained eyeballs glazed with vengeful ire,
 His spreading nostrils seemed to snort out fire.
 Swiftly from rock to rock he following flung,
 While round his neck his shaggy offspring clung ;
 And now like some dark tower erect he stood,
 Where the last rock hung frowning o'er the flood.
 “ Look ! look ! ” he seemed to say with action wild,
 “ Look, mother, look ! this babe is still your child.
 “ With him as me, all social bonds you break,
 “ Scorned and detested for his father's sake ;
 “ My love, my service, only wrought disdain,

" And nature fed his heart from thine in vain.
 " Then go, Ingrate. Far o'er the billows go,
 " Consign your friend, your child, to endless woe ;
 " Renounce us ! hate us ! pleased your course pursue,
 " And break their hearts who live alone for you."
 His eyes which flashed red flames, his arms spread wide, }
 His brat raised high to heaven, too plain implied, }
 Such were his thoughts—tho' nature speech denied. }
 And now with eager glance the deep he viewed,
 And now with savage howl the Bark pursued ;
 Then to his lips the Infant wildly prest,
 And fondly, fiercely, clasped it to his breast.
 Three piteous moans, three hideous yells he gave,
 Plunged headlong from the rock and made the sea their
 grave.

CANTO XI.

Where screened by myrtle groves and orange bowers,
 Saint—favoured Cintra rears her Gothic towers,
 A nun there dwells, most holy, sad, and fair,
 Her only business, penance, fasts and prayer.
 Her only joy the shrines with flowers to dress,
 Weep with the suffering, and relieve distress.
 A poor lay sister she ; yet golden rain
 Showers from her hand, to glad each barren plain.
 In other eyes she lights up joy, but ne'er
 Those eyes of hers were seen a smile to wear ;
 From other breasts she plucks the thorn of grief,
 But feels her own admits of no relief.
 When age and sickness count the hours by groans,
 Uncalled she comes to hear and hush their moans ;
 There ever humble, watchful, patient, kind,
 No nauseous task, no servile care declined.
 O'er the sick couch all day—all night she hangs,
 Till health or death relieve the sufferer's pangs.
 No thanks she takes, no praise from man receives,
 Her duty done, the rest to God she leaves ;
 With blessings still where'er that nun they view,
 The aged, the young, her sainted steps pursue.
 And cry with bended knees, and suppliant air,
 " Sister of Mary, name us in thy prayer ! "
 With beads the night—in gracious acts the day,
 So wore her youth, so wears her age away.
 Now cease my lay ; my tale of woe is o'er,
 Irza, farewell ! I wake thy lute no more.

CANTO XII.

" Was such her fate ! And did her days then creep,
 So sad, so slow, till came the eternal sleep ?
 And did for this her hands with roses twine,
 The Saviour's Altar and the Virgin's shrine ;
 Pure, beauteous, rich—did all these blessings tend,
 But from the world in prime of life to send
 This gifted maid in prayer to waste her hours,
 And weep a fancied crime in cloistered bowers ? "
 Oh ! blind to fate ! perhaps that " fancied crime,"
 Which bade her quit the world in youthful prime ;
 Snatched her from paths where beauty, wealth, and fame,
 Had proved but snares to load her soul with shame.
 And spared her pangs from wilful guilt, whence flow
 The only serious ill that man can know.
 Ah ! what avails it, (since they ne'er can last)
 If gay or sad our span of life be past ;
 Pray, mortals, pray, in sickness and in pain,
 Not long nor blest to live, but pure from stain.
 A life of pleasure, and a life of woe,
 When both are past, the difference who can show ?
 But all can tell how wide apart in price,
 A life of virtue, and a life of vice.
 Then still, sad Irza, tread thy thorny way,
 Since life must end and merits ne'er decay ;
 Wounded past hope, still prize the pleasure pure,
 To heal those hearts which still may hope a cure ;
 Nor doubt the soul which joys in generous deeds,

Shall reap a rich reward when most it needs ;
When comes that day to conscious guilt so dread,
Angels unseen shall bathe your burning head ;
The prayers of Orphans fall with cooling breath,
And Widows' blessings drown the threats of death :
Each sigh your pity hushed, shall swelling rise,
In sweet Hosannas while you mount the skies ;
And every tear on Earth to sorrow given,
To wreath your brows, be precious pearls in Heaven.

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